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KAL 7 was on intelligence mission, magazine reports

London
South Korean KAL Flight 7 was on an intricate intelligence-gathering mission with the US space shuttle Challenger when the Soviets shot it down in their airspace last September, killing 269 people, a British defense magazine reported.

The magazine, Defense Attache, contends the civilian plane purposely flew over Soviet territory to activate the Soviet defense system so that the ensuing electronic emissions could be recorded by the Americans.

In Washington, a Pentagon spokesman said Sunday the Defense Department would have no comment on the allegation until it obtained a copy of the article.

Defense Attache is a twice-monthly journal, widely read in the British defense industry and well regarded by the British Defense Ministry. The magazine said it did not necessarily agree with all the views in the article but published it to inspire further investigation. The editor said the author had to remain anonymous for professional reasons but was someone well-known to him.

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